



Envision Arlington Standing Committee

Date: Wednesday, February 15, 2023
Time: 7:30-9:00 PM
Conducted by Remote Participation

Attendees: Juli Brazile, Caroline Murray, Alex Bagnall, Michael Brownstein, Jagat Adhiya, Len Diggins, Johanna Meyer, Elizabeth Dray

Minutes

1. Introductions

As a member of the Advisory Board, Len Diggins offered to open the meeting since our first order of business was to select a new interim chair.

2. Discussion & Possible Vote: New Interim Chair

Michael Brownstein volunteered to serve, which we agree meant he nominated himself. 2nd by Juli. 5-0 of the voting members present. Michael took over the facilitation of the meeting.

3. Report on the Envision Arlington Advisory Board Discussion

Juli shared her draft meeting notes from the Advisory Board meeting with committee members before tonight's meeting. Len offered a few thoughts, and then Michael proposed that each member share their thoughts on the primary issue before us: What is the best purpose for Envision Arlington (EA) or the EA Standing Committee (EASC) right now?

Len: The concept that the EA can be an incubator for new groups is a positive. He agrees that the recently formed Civic Engagement Group (CEG) has a broad umbrella mission similar to the EASC. Working with the Dept. of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) could be very valuable since forums and resident engagement are an important part of planning work.

Michael: Convening (used in our meetings to describe bringing stakeholders with common interests in EA's broad vision statements together to identify possible collaborations to address issues) and working on the Annual Town Survey are both time-consuming, so we can only do one. Convening is a good mission For EA if the DPCD can take over the survey work. We need to rebuild our connections to the task groups.

Jagat listed five things he thinks are important: 1) With a new Master Plan on the horizon, community engagement is a critical mission. 2) Educating residents on issues, how town government works, and how they can be part of it. 3) As a community, evaluating the progress made under the current Master Plan. 4) Promoting diversity in all aspects of town life. 5) The survey should not be lost – it's a tool for DPCD and Town Meeting to gather actionable data.

Johanna: She often speaks with residents as she volunteers on projects at the Reservoir and hears a lot of similar questions. She sees a need for listening/surveying/providing opportunities to ask questions and using multiple tools to distribute information/answers through precinct meetings and neighborhood organizations.

Caroline: Basic PR could raise EA's profile. Regular social media or Alington List posts recognizing work done by task groups could benefit the entire organization and would fall under the EASC mission.

Alex: Volunteer committees responsible for operational aspects of town government are challenging. Our original mission was to envision Arlington's possible future. Task groups were supposed to be temporary committees. He'd focus more on visioning rather than carrying out the work the vision requires.

Len: I would like to see EA and EASC working to support residents who want to try and do the work toward change.

Michael: Do the task groups know what the EASC is/does? Do we bring value to their work?

The value of task groups is the honor generally accorded to Envision Arlington. There was a discussion about how the EASC could get to know the task groups and their work and concerns. We have sometimes assigned EASC members as liaisons to specific task groups to attend meetings and facilitate collaborations with other groups. Or we could ask task groups to send representatives to EASC meetings (the original system). Either way, meeting fatigue is a concern for volunteers.

It would be good to align the task groups under a shared EA mission. EASC's role is to ensure strategies are defined and report progress to the town/Town Meeting. Task groups are able to focus on finding enthusiastic people to help get things done. There was a sense that visiting task group meetings or starting by interviewing task group

4. Process for Approving the 2022 Survey Report

Some EASC members have commented on Johanna's Draft Report on the 2022 Survey. She's done the edits, and we agreed she should email it to Claire Ricker for approval.

5. Vote: League of Women's Voters Candidates' Night at Town Hall

Juli reported that the League of Women Voters was again holding Candidate's Night in person. For years, that event has been a partnership with EA. We provide logistical support and coordinate renting Town Hall and Town Notice emails, and the League runs the evening. Juli can handle the paperwork for renting Town Hall and requested a vote to authorize the rental fee of \$220. Caroline 2nd. 5-0 vote to approve.

6. Discussion: Virtual-only Candidates' Night for TMM Candidates

Len and Alex are willing to set up the Zoom rooms to support this event, similar to what we've done.

7. Hosting Another "Zoning Demystified" Forum

Alex proposed we repeat a program EA sponsored last year. Christian Klein (Zoning Board of Appeals and TMM) is willing to provide information on residential zoning. Juli moved that we sponsor the event. Alex 2nd. 5-0 vote to approve. The event is being planned for either late May or June, so we'll get more information at our next two meetings.

8. New Business

Juli brought up several pieces of financial business.

a. 2023 Town Census included an insert about the Town Survey. We need to vote to authorize paying for the printing.

b. Reservoir Committee spent \$125.59 on materials for Town Day.

c. Reservoir Committee (RC) also bought hats to distinguish the Reservoir Committee from the other volunteer groups working with the RC at the Reservoir, and that cost is \$376.39. The Reservoir Committee raised \$93, which went to the Arlington Land Trust or to cover the costs of plants, seeds, soils, refreshments, first aid kits, water, gardening gloves, and the other expenses related to hosting volunteer groups at the Reservoir.

d. Finance Committee has asked us if we'd like to hold at our current funding level or request an increase for FY24. We propose holding at our current funding.

Juli moved approval of these items as discussed. Alex 2nd. 5-0 vote to approve.

We adjourned the meeting at 9:10 pm.